

Idaho Panhandle Avalanche Center Avalanche Advisory

Contact: Kevin Davis (208) 265-6686, Ed Odegaard (208) 245-6209, or John Olson (208) 265-6635

This message is available by calling (208) 765-7323 or toll-free at 1-866-489-8664.

E-mail address: kevingdavis@fs.fed.us, eodegaard@fs.fed.us, jrolson@fs.fed.us, ebmorgan@fs.fed.us

This is Kevin Davis with the Idaho Panhandle Avalanche Center. Today is December 6th, 2010. We will begin issuing regular avalanche advisories on December 17th. The avalanche advisory will be issued every Friday at 7:30 AM with an outlook for Saturday and Sunday, same as always. As the snow accumulates and your adventures take you further into the backcountry send us your pit data, avalanche observations, or pictures. Good information goes a long way. Thanks to Peter Bock of Spokane and Dave Alley, Ski patrol Director at Silver Mountain for submitting snowpack observations and pit data.

Up and out of the Silver Valley atop Kellogg Peak Dave is measuring about 4 feet of snow that is very cold and light in the upper two feet. His pit data shows he is producing some easy shears at layers where the snow changes in density on a north aspect at 6,000 feet. Over near Stevens Peak Peter found changes in density due to wind and surface snow easily sloughing last week. They both noted a crust layer near the ground, below which the snow is very sugary and faceted. Eric and I were in the Cabinets last week and measured about 4 feet of snow at 5,000 feet. Our stability tests revealed weak layers at changes in density but the weak layers did not shear cleanly or completely. The pack was undergoing settlement from the previous storm which laid down a heavier layer of snow on top. The layering in the pack now should have you asking yourself whether the terrain you intend to travel is safe. There are some changes in density in the pack that have resulted in heavier snow overlying lighter snow. It may be the upper pack and it could be toward the ground but you should know what you're dealing with and what the consequences would be if you did trigger something. We had some nice sliding out there so you can choose safe, lower angle, less exposed terrain if you're not sure. Some obstacles are still poking out, or worse yet, thinly buried, so be on your guard.

The State of Idaho Parks and Recreation Department in cooperation with the IPNF-AC, is conducting (**Free**) avalanche workshops for snowmobilers this winter in Coeur d' Alene on December 3rd and January 14th and 15th, St. Maries January 28th and 29th, and in Bonners Ferry February 11th and 12th. For more information go to the Idaho Parks and Recreation Department website at www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov, or call Marc Hildesheim, North Region Trails Specialist, at (208) 769-1511.

The Panhandle Avalanche Center in Sandpoint and Sandpoint Parks and Recreation is sponsoring free avalanche workshops for all snowgoers this winter. It begins with avalanche transceiver training on 12/8/10. Then, "What we can learn from ten years of avalanche accident review in North Idaho" workshops will be offered 1/5/11 and 2/9/11. These are offered at the new Forest Service Building in Sandpoint at 6PM and are **Free to**

the public. For class schedules in the Silver Valley contact Dan Frigard at 752-5130. So far Dan has a workshop scheduled for January 22nd at 9AM and will be an interactive class focusing on avalanche dynamics. In Avery, contact Ed Odegaard at 245-6209.

If you have a group or club that is interested in more education on avalanche safety we will be available for free avalanche awareness classes beginning in December, so feel free to give us a call. As usual we would appreciate hearing from anyone who happens to observe any recent avalanche activity while out in the backcountry or just wants to let us know what is going on in their area.